

The University Library Committee

Almost every large university has a library committee. It is usually composed of thirteen members, most of whom are drawn from the teaching faculty. The members are appointed by the university administration or faculty acting individually or jointly. The library director is likely to be an ex officio member of the committee. The committee is largely advisory, concerning itself with the establishment of policies and with the maintenance of liaison among the faculty, administration, and library.

A QUESTIONNAIRE regarding the structure and functions of the library committee was forwarded on September 1, 1967, to the library directors of sixty-four universities holding membership in the Association of Research Libraries. Replies were received from fifty-six, of which fifty-four have university library committees.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The average number of members on a library committee is thirteen, of whom ten are members of the teaching faculty; one is the library director; and two are either members of the library staff, university administrative officers, or students. The smallest committee is composed of six members, and the largest sixty-six. Only one committee is made up of entirely teaching faculty members. The teaching faculty constitutes a majority on all committees but two, and a two-thirds majority on all but eight committees. As shown in Table 1, members representing the teaching faculty are appointed either by the university administration without faculty participation in

the selection procedure, by the faculty directly or indirectly through one of its agencies such as a committee on committees or the senate, by the university administration and the faculty acting jointly, or by the governing body of the university.

The library director is consulted regarding the appointments made to approximately two-thirds of the committees included within this survey. As revealed in Table 2, he is more likely to be consulted when the university administration exercises the appointment power, and less likely to be consulted when the power is left entirely in the hands of the faculty.

The library director is an *ex officio* member of forty-three committees and the chairman of six. For the remaining five committees, one director serves as the administrative advisor to the committee; one is usually appointed to the

TABLE 1
APPOINTMENT OF FACULTY MEMBERS
TO THE COMMITTEE

Members Appointed by	No. of Committees
University Administration	20
Faculty	17
University Adm. and Faculty jointly	13
Governing Board	4

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committee; and three, although they have no official status in relation to the committee, do attend its meetings. The library director is the only person in an official capacity representing the library on forty-three committees, while on eleven committees from one to thirteen library staff members other than the director serve as members of the committee. As a rule there is but one such member, and he almost always serves on an *ex officio* basis; he is usually a member of the administrative staff of the library.

On thirty-three of the committees the university administration is not represented; on twenty-one it is. The number of members who represent the university administration ranges from one to seven with the most common number being either one or two. Two-thirds of such members serve on an *ex officio* basis while the other third is appointed. The university officers who most commonly serve in this capacity are the president, the academic vice-president, the graduate school dean, and deans of other schools within the university. Thirty-nine committees have no student representatives while fifteen do. Student appointees to seven committees are named by an agency of student government, to four committees they are nominated by an agency of student government and appointed by the president, and to one they are named by the senate. The number of student members ranges from one

TABLE 3

TERMS OF OFFICE

1 year	7	committees
3 years	27	"
4 "	7	"
5 "	2	"
Indefinite	11	"

to four with the average number being two.

Table 3 shows that the term of office of appointed members varies from one year to an indefinite term with the three-year term being the one most commonly used. Forty-four committees attempt to stagger the terms. Thirty-seven accomplish this by retiring either a third, fourth, or a fifth of the members each year depending upon the length of the term.

FUNCTIONS

Table 4 discloses that the committee acts largely in an advisory capacity. The committee's role in the selection of new key library staff members is almost nil. Its part in book selection can be described at best as minor. Although the committee may be involved in the allocation of the book budget to the various departments and schools within the university and in the approval of the proposed library budget prior to its submission to the university fiscal officer, its role in both of these areas is limited.

TABLE 2

CONSULTATION OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR REGARDING
APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMITTEE

Method of Appointment	Usually Consulted	Sometimes Consulted	Not Consulted	No Reply
University administration	15	2	3	...
Faculty	7	...	9	1
University administration and faculty jointly	7	1	5	...
Governing board	4
Total	33	3	17	1

TABLE 4
FUNCTION OF COMMITTEES

	No. of Committees
Primary Function:	
Advisory	45
Policy making	4
Advisory and liaison	3
Advisory and legislative	1
Liaison	1
Role in Selection of New Key Library Staff Members:	
None	44
Consulted occasionally	6
Advisory	1
No reply	3
Role in Book Selection:	
None	30
Advisory	8
Establishment of general policies	7
Very minor role	5
Consulted occasionally	2
No reply	2
Role in Allocation of Book Budget:	
None	25
Establishment of final allocation	10
Approval	9
Advisory	6
Examination and approval	1
Review	1
No reply	3
Approval of Proposed Budget:	
None	35
Advisory	7
Approval	5
Approval of book portions only	3
Examination and approval	1
No reply	1
Establishment of Policies Regarding the Library's Operations:	
Major activity	18
Active	10
Advisory	9
Minor role	9
Useful in establishing public service policies	6
No reply	2
Liaison Among the Library, Faculty, and University Administration:	
Active	22
Limited role	15
Major role	11
None	2
Advisory	1
No reply	3
Selection of a New Library Director:	
None	18
Definite role, but not specified	8
Part of a larger selection committee	6
Uncertain as to its role	6

Substantial role	5
Advisory	4
Possible role	2
No reply	5
Other Areas:	
No new ones added	15
Help with plant needs	6
Automation policies	1
Operational procedures and general growth of library	1
No reply	31

The committee is concerned largely with the establishment of policies, especially those of a public service nature, in the operation of the library and with the maintenance of liaison among the faculty, library, and university administration. There is an even chance that the committee may be involved in the selection of a new library director.

SUMMARY

The average library committee therefore is composed of thirteen members, most of whom are drawn from the teaching faculty. They are appointed by either the university administration or the faculty, acting individually or jointly. The library director is usually consulted concerning appointments to two-thirds of the committees. He is also likely to be an *ex officio* member of the committee. Thirty-five of the fifty-four committees included in this survey appear to play a minor role in the operation in the library; thirteen perform an important role in a particular area; and six appear to have a major role. Committees are most concerned with the establishment of policies regarding the operation of the library and in the maintenance of liaison among the various elements making up the university community. Approximately half of the committees participate in varying degrees in the selection of a new library director. ■ ■